

# MONTANA UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

Volume 17 • Issue 11 • November 2006

## Strategic Plan Begins Taking Shape

In 2002, almost a thousand Montanans from across the state provided input, comment and commitment to the creation of the Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan 2003-2007. Judging from the actions and comments of those involved, this plan has served as a useful tool for stakeholders to prioritize and direct their resources and activities for the success of Montana's Tourism and Recreation Industry.

As the 2003-2007 Plan enters its last year, it's time to start building off its success. The new blueprint 2008-2012 will start taking shape in November 2006. The Hingston Roach Group, the contractor that helped create the current plan, will once again be facilitating public involvement in the Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan process.

In November and early December, the Hingston Roach Group is organizing public meetings in each of the state's six tourism regions to gather your thoughts on:

- Current Strategic Plan – what's working and what's not?
- New BIG Issues and Opportunities for Montana Tourism & Recreation
- Top Tourism & Recreation Issues, Challenges and Ideas for the new plan to address

The schedule for the November/December meetings (check this Update's calendar listing) as well as other strategic plan details and many more public involvement opportunities are posted on Travel Montana's Intranet site: [www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/2008strategicplan).

The new strategic plan will be finalized and in place by January 2008.

## \$8 Million Production Chooses Montana for Its Backdrop



Montana will have a starring role in the family musical adventure "The von Trapp Children Christmas Movie," being produced by the Durham, NC-based Studio in The Woods, Inc. Exteriors for the film are set to be shot in the von Trapp's home state of Montana in December 2006 and January and February 2007. The film is scheduled for release during the 2007 Christmas season.

John Demers, the creative mind behind the movie and one of the Executive Producers, noted that they are committed to live up to the standards of the 1960s film inspired by the von Trapp children's great grandparents, the Captain and Maria von Trapp, made famous in "The Sound of Music."

The film is budgeted at close to \$8 million, approximately half of which will be spent while in Montana. "A production of this size will make a considerable economic impact in the communities where filming will take place" said Commerce Director Tony Preite. "The fiscal benefits coupled with the opportunity to feature Montana to a worldwide audience emphasizes the importance of attracting film projects of this caliber to the state."

## TIIP Grants Awarded

Lewistown's Charlie Russell Chew Choo Dinner Tour Train, Polson's John Dowdall Theatre, the Culberston Museum, Glasgow's Pioneer Museum and Valley Event Center, Bozeman-based Montana Shakespeare in the Parks and the Utica Community Center are

the recipients of \$200,000 from the Montana Department of Commerce's 2006 Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) "bed tax" grant funds to assist in the completion of tourism-related facility improvements.

The seven TIIP grant recipients were selected from 38 applications requesting \$1.69 million from the Commerce Department program.

"The investment of tourism 'bed tax' dollars into these seven projects will leverage \$1.8 million in community, state, federal and foundation dollars, creating and supporting local construction and service industry jobs," Commerce Director Tony Preite said in approving the TIIP Grant Awards. He added that "these projects strengthen Montana's appeal as a visitor destination, something that benefits the entire state."

Since 1995, TIIP grants have provided over \$2.4 million in tourism "bed tax" funds to 56 projects in 37 Montana communities. These TIIP-assisted projects represent a total investment of over \$31 million in Montana's tourism-related infrastructure.

## VICs Reach Visitor Milestone

It was a banner year for the nine Travel Montana-supported visitor information centers (VICs) as they hosted over 200,000 visitors for the first time ever. Travel Montana and nine community partners operate VICs at nine major highway entrances to Montana: Broadus, Culbertson, Dillon, Hardin, Lolo Pass, St. Regis, Shelby, West Yellowstone and Wibaux. During the months of May through September, 202,092 visitors used these VIC facilities and took advantage of travel counselors' knowledge and personal

## Send Us Your Email. We'll Keep Sending Updates.



We are transitioning this monthly Travel Montana/Montana Film Office "Update" to an electronic newsletter in the coming months. **If you want to continue receiving this, we need 10 seconds of your time.**

All you have to do is send your email address, along with your name and business name and any corrections to your address information below, to:

**TMUpdate@visitmt.com**

That's it. You'll continue to get the Update, we'll help conserve paper and the world will be a happier place. Thank you for your part in helping us to be more efficient and cost-effective.

attention which is a 3.4% increase over 2005. Six of the nine VICs posted increases over 2005 with the average increase totaling more than 700 new visitors per visitor center.

## Welcome New Council Members

Governor Brian Schweitzer has recently appointed three new members to serve on the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC). These individuals are Cyndy Andrus, Executive Director of the Bozeman CVB, Beverly Harbaugh, owner of Sand Creek Clydesdales in Jordan and Marilyn Polich, General Manager of the Copper King Hotel and Convention Center in Butte. In addition, three council members were reappointed by the Governor including Dyani Bingham of the Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance; Mark Browning, Executive Director of the Custer County Art and Heritage Center; and Michael Morrison, President of Davidson Travel Consultants out of Great Falls.

Travel Montana would also like to thank our departing council members for the dedication and commitment they have provided to the tourism industry of Montana: Mary Ellen Schnur of Townsend and RJ Young of Poplar.

## Service That Sells!

Treating Montana's visitors and residents to extraordinary service is not just a warm season endeavor. As a four-season destination, Montana's tourism and recreation businesses and organizations strive to be the best hosts they can be—24/7. To help keep you and your staff on top of your hosting skills, Montana Superhosts' "Service That Sells!" customer service training seminars are ready for late fall and winter scheduling.

"Service that Sells!" provides a 3-hour customer service seminar full of ideas, interaction, timely information and community pride all focused on getting visitors to Stop, Stay, Spend, Recommend and Return Again and Again! It's a great way to gear up for the winter visitor season.

To schedule a "Service that Sells!" seminar, contact Montana Superhost, 406-756-3374, FAX 406-756-3351 or [superhost@fvcc.edu](mailto:superhost@fvcc.edu).

You, your employees and your customers: make them a profitable combination with "Service that Sells!"



## On to a New Adventure...

After a long and dedicated career as Travel Montana and the Montana Film Office's Operations Manager, David Broussard is heading into retirement. David was the behind-the-scenes man that made sure the bills were paid, budgets were on track and fulfillment through our mailroom ran smoothly and efficiently.

David and his new bride, Pam, plan to become tourists in their own right with plenty of travel topping their retirement itinerary.

David will be greatly missed by the Montana Promotion Division staff and we extend our heartfelt thanks to him for his service to the state over the past 25 years. We hope you enjoy this next journey in your life, David!

*Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.*



## Calendar of Events:

### November

- 7-10 World Travel Market, London
- 7, 10, 23 MPD Offices Closed
- 13 Strategic Plan Public Mtg., Bozeman
- 14 Strategic Plan Public Mtg., Billings
- 15 Strategic Plan Public Mtg., Wolf Point
- 28 Strategic Plan Public Mtg., Great Falls
- 29 Strategic Plan Public Mtg., Butte
- 30-12/1 Region/CVB Meeting, Helena

### December

- 4 Strategic Plan Public Mtg, Missoula
- 5 Strategic Plan Public Mtg, Kalispell

*For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:*  
**[travelmontana.mt.gov](http://travelmontana.mt.gov)**



**Travel Montana • Montana Film Office**  
**Montana Department of Commerce**

301 S. Park  
PO Box 200533  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

STD PRSRT  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Helena, MT  
Permit No. 20